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2005 THOMAS JEFFERSON AWARD WINNING METRO FORMAT NEWSPAPER

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Two Hawaii-based Marines killed in Iraq

Press Release

MCBH Public Affairs

Sergeant David R. Christoff, a rifleman and close-combat instructor assigned to 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, based here, died May 22 while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in Al Anbar province, Iraq.

The 25-year-old was conducting a dismounted patrol when an improvised explosive device struck him.

Christoff joined the Marine Corps November 2001 and reported to Hawaii September 2005.

He deployed to Iraq March 2006.

His awards include the Purple Heart, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Sea Service Deployment ribbon.

Christoff, a Rossford, Ohio native, is survived by his mother and father.

Lance Corporal William J. Leusink, a rifleman assigned to 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, based here, died May 22 while conducting combat operations against enemy forces

in Al Anbar province, Iraq.

The 21-year-old was conducting a dismounted patrol when an improvised explosive device struck him.

Leusink joined the Marine Corps June 2003 and reported to Hawaii April 2004.

He deployed to Iraq March 2006.

His awards include the Combat Action Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Sea Service Deployment ribbon. He is recommended for the Purple Heart.

Leusink, a Maurice, Iowa native, is survived by his wife and parents.



CHRISTOFF



LEUSINK

Commandant to reinforce core values, standards to all



Sgt. Juan Vara

AL ASAD, Iraq – General Michael W. Hagee, commandant of the Marine Corps, addresses Marines and Sailors with Provisional Security Battalion and Marine Wing Support Squadron 271 during a visit to Al Asad. General Hagee and Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada, sergeant major of the Marine Corps, visited service members supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

See 'ON MARINE VIRTUE,' A-2

Excellence Recognized



Courtesy photo by Zweiq Photography, Inc.

Donald R. Schregardus, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Environment) (left); Alex A. Beehler, Assistant Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health; Kenneth J. Krieg, Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics; Dr. Diane Drigot, Senior Natural Resources Management Specialist, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay; and Kent Murata, Assistant Chief of Staff (AFS), G-4 MCBH pose for a photograph with the Secretary of Defense Natural Resources Conservation Award (for small installations), which was presented to MCBH in a ceremony in Washington, D.C., May 3. After winning first place in the Secretary of the Navy's award competition in three categories: Natural Resources Conservation for small installations, Natural Resources, Individual representatives (Dr. Drigot); and the Environmental Quality Award for a nonindustrial installation. Marine Corps Base Hawaii went on to win the overall Secretary of Defense Natural Resources Conservation award for 2005.

New police force in Iraqi-Syrian border town ready to face enemy



Cpl. Antonio Rosas

An Iraqi police officer provides security for U.S. Marines during a patrol in Husaybah, Iraq, May 15 – just days before the first of the two bombings occurred. The bombings killed five police officers and wounded eight others.

Cpl. Antonio Rosas

1st Marine Division

HUSAYBAH, Iraq – Despite two recent suicide bombings on a new police station here, one Iraqi police officer in this Iraq-Syria border town said his men are undeterred in their duties and are ready to work on their own.

"Ahmed," a 45-year-old police captain, is one of several new police officers in this city of 50,000 who has endured two attacks on the city's district police headquarters, which has resulted in the deaths of five police officers and injured eight others.

The first attack occurred a week ago when a man walked to the police station and detonated a vest bomb, killing five policemen and wounding five others.

Several days later, the station was attacked again – this time by a vehicle bomb, which detonated prematurely, killing two of the vehicle's passengers and wounding another. Three policemen were wounded in that incident.

The attacks came just one month after

the opening of the police station.

Despite these attacks the Iraqi cops are undeterred in their duties, said Ahmed.

"It is a lot safer in Husaybah now," said Ahmed, who recalled more violent times in the city before coalition forces conducted a large-scale operation to rid the city of insurgents last November.

Now, officers are conducting independent operations – regular foot and vehicle patrols through the city, often times without a large U.S. Marine presence to back them.

"I can walk the streets and not be scared for my life," he said.

The handful of U.S. Marines assigned to work with and mentor the fledgling police force agree. They say the police reacted appropriately during the bombings, rushing to the scene to treat the wounded and secure the area.

Even off-duty police came in to assist, according to the Marines.

"They got out into the street pretty quick and they were doing everything they needed to do to take care of their people," said Staff Sgt. David J. Perry, the

team's operations chief. "They were immediately setting up roadblocks and checking people out."

Now, just days after the second bombing, the police officers continue to show up for work and are receiving cooperation from the locals every day – a sign of progress toward stability in the region, according to the transition team.

"They're still doing a good job, just a little more alert now," said Maj. Robert C. Marshall, officer-in-charge of the police transition team here.

The police force was stood up earlier this month after its officers graduated from a six-month officer training camp.

Ahmed was born and raised in Husaybah, a city that has been relatively quiet in recent months, until the two suicide attacks.

Ahmed recalled more violent days in the town – kidnappings, beatings, and murder.

Before becoming a police officer Ahmed spent three years as an interpreter

See **POLICE**, A-6

NEWS BRIEFS

Temporary Beach Closing

There will be a temporary beach closing at Pyramid Rock from 8 a.m. July 21 to 8 a.m. July 26. The beach will be closed during the amphibious assault portion of the exercise: Rim of the Pacific. During the exercise, amphibious assault will be utilizing the beach for precombat training support of RIMPAC.

Personnel are not authorized in this area on the dates and times mentioned above as a precaution to injury to personal property or personnel.

For more information, contact Daniel Geltmacher at 257-8884.

Base Chapel Activities

June 10, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. brings the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) to the Base Chapel. PREP is a communication and problem solving skills workshop for married or engaged couples.

For information call Chaplain Nazario at 257-1501

K-Bay Pass House Hours Change

Kaneohe Bay, Marine Corps Base Hawaii Pass and Registration Office hours have changed. New hours are 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.

For more information call 257-2047 or 257-9962.

Parking Lot Closure

The Base Theater parking lot will be closed until approximately Aug. 23 for repairs and improvements.

For more information, contact Base Facilities at 257-2171.

Tax Center

The Base Tax Center will operate year-round from the Legal Services Center, Building 215. To setup an appointment to have your taxes prepared, call the Legal Assistance Office at 257-2110, ext. 236. The Tax Center will also do taxes on a walk-in basis.

ICE Seeks Feedback

Interactive Customer Evaluation provides customers with a convenient and efficient method to express opinions to service providers and receive feedback. Log on to: <http://ice.disa.mil>.

Hawaii Redemption Site

Hawaii 5-cent redemption services are available from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m every Friday. The truck will be parked in the parking lot across the street from the Marine Corps Exchange Annex.

Hawaii Marine Accepts Letters

Hawaii Marine welcomes comments for the "Letters to the Editor" section. Letters should be clear and concise. Hawaii Marine reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and length. Comments must be signed with a full name and a telephone number must be provided.

Hawaii Marine also accepts news briefs containing relevant information pertaining to Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

All letters and news briefs should be e-mailed to: editor@hawaiimarine.com.

Important Phone Numbers:

On-Base Emergencies	911
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110
MCBH Duty Chaplain	257-7700

‘On Marine Virtue’

Gen. M. W. Hagee

Recent serious allegations concerning actions of Marines in combat have caused me concern. They should cause you to be concerned as well. To ensure we continue to live up to General Lejeune's description of a Marine as someone who demonstrates "all that is highest in military efficiency and soldierly virtue," I would like to review the importance of our core values.

As Marines, you are taught from your earliest days in the Corps about our core values of honor, courage and commitment. These values are part of and belong to all Marines, regardless of MOS, grade, or gender. They guide us in all that we do; whether in combat, in garrison, or on leave or liberty.

To a Marine, honor is more than just honesty; it means having uncompromising personal integrity and being accountable for all actions. To most Marines, the

most difficult part of courage is not the raw physical courage that we have seen so often on today's battlefield. It is rather the moral courage to do the "right thing" in the face of danger or pressure from other Marines. Finally, commitment is that focus on caring for one another and upholding the great ideals of our Corps and Country.

The nature of this war with its ruthless enemies, and its complex and dangerous battlefield will continue to challenge us in the commitment to our core values. We must be strong and help one another to measure up. The war will also test our commitment to our belief in the rule of law.

We have all been educated in the Law of Armed Conflict. We continue to reinforce that training, even when deployed to combat zones. We do not employ force just for the sake of employing force. We use lethal force only when justified, proportional and, most importantly, lawful. We fol-

low the laws and regulations, Geneva Convention and Rules of Engagement. This is the American way of war. We must regulate force and violence, we only damage property that must be damaged, and we protect the non-combatants we find on the battlefield.

When engaged in combat, particularly in the kind of counterinsurgency operations we're involved in now, we have to be doubly on guard. Many of our Marines have been involved in life or death combat or have witnessed the loss of their fellow Marines, and the effects of these events can be numbing. There is the risk of becoming indifferent to the loss of a human life, as well as bringing dishonor upon ourselves. Leaders of all grades need to reinforce continually that Marines care for one another and do what is right.

The large majority of Marines today perform magnificently on and off the battlefield. I am very proud of the bravery, dedication, honor, courage and commitment

you clearly display every day. And America is proud as well. Americans, indeed most people around the world, recognize that Marines are men and women of the highest caliber – physically, mentally, and morally.

Each one of you contributes in your own unique way to our important mission; I am proud of your dedication and accomplishments. Even after 38 years, I still stand with pride every time I hear the Marines Hymn. The words of that Hymn mean something special to me. Especially, "Keep our Honor Clean". I know that means something to all of you as well. As Marines we have an obligation to past Marines, fellow Marines, future Marines and ourselves to do our very best to live up to these words.

As your Commandant, I charge all Marines to carry on our proud legacy by demonstrating our values in everything you do – on duty and off; in combat or in garrison. Semper Fidelis.

Headquarters Marine Corps

WASHINGTON, D.C. – General Michael W. Hagee, commandant of the Marine Corps, will address Marine officers and enlisted men and women in a series of events inside and outside the U.S. over the next several weeks. The purpose of his visits will be to reinforce the ideals, values and standards for which Marines have been known for more than 200 years.

Groundbreaking Ceremony



Tony Blazejack

Members of Windward Community Federal Credit Union's Board of Directors and constructors break ground at the future sight of the credit union's new facility located next to the Commissary here May 31. The \$2.6 million project will feature drive-through and walk-up teller lines in addition to extended hours of operation and is expected to be completed in January 2007.

CSSG-3 Change of Command



LILES

Colonel Donald Liles will relieve Col. Brian Hearnberger as commanding officer, Combat Service Support Group 3 in a ceremony on June 6 at 10 a.m. at Dewey Square, Marine Corps Base Hawaii. Liles, a Madison, Ind. native, is coming to Marine Corps Base Hawaii from Combat Logistics Battalion 13 where he completed a deployment to Iraq and the U. S. Central Command, Area of Operations.



HEARNSBERGER

Weekend weather outlook

Today



Day — Partly to mostly cloudy skies with unrestricted visibility and isolated afternoon and evening rain showers. The high temp will be 81F, and the winds will be easterly at 10-15 mph.

Night — Partly cloudy skies with isolated light rain showers after midnight. The overnight low temp will be 73F, and the winds will be easterly at 10 mph

High — 81
Low — 73

Saturday



Day — Partly to mostly cloudy skies with unrestricted visibility and isolated afternoon and evening rain showers. The high temp will be 81F, and the winds will be easterly at 10-15 mph.

Night — Partly cloudy with an overnight low temp of 73F. Light east winds at 10 mph

High — 81
Low — 73

Sunday



Day — Continued partly to mostly cloudy skies with unrestricted visibility and isolated afternoon and early evening rain showers. The high temp will be 81F, and the winds will be easterly at 10-15 mph.

Night — Partly cloudy with isolated rain showers. The overnight low temp will be 72F, and the winds will be easterly at 10-15 mph

High — 81
Low — 72

Hawaii MARINE

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Combat Correspondent	Lance Cpl. Edward C. deBree
Combat Correspondent	Lance Cpl. Roger L. Nelson

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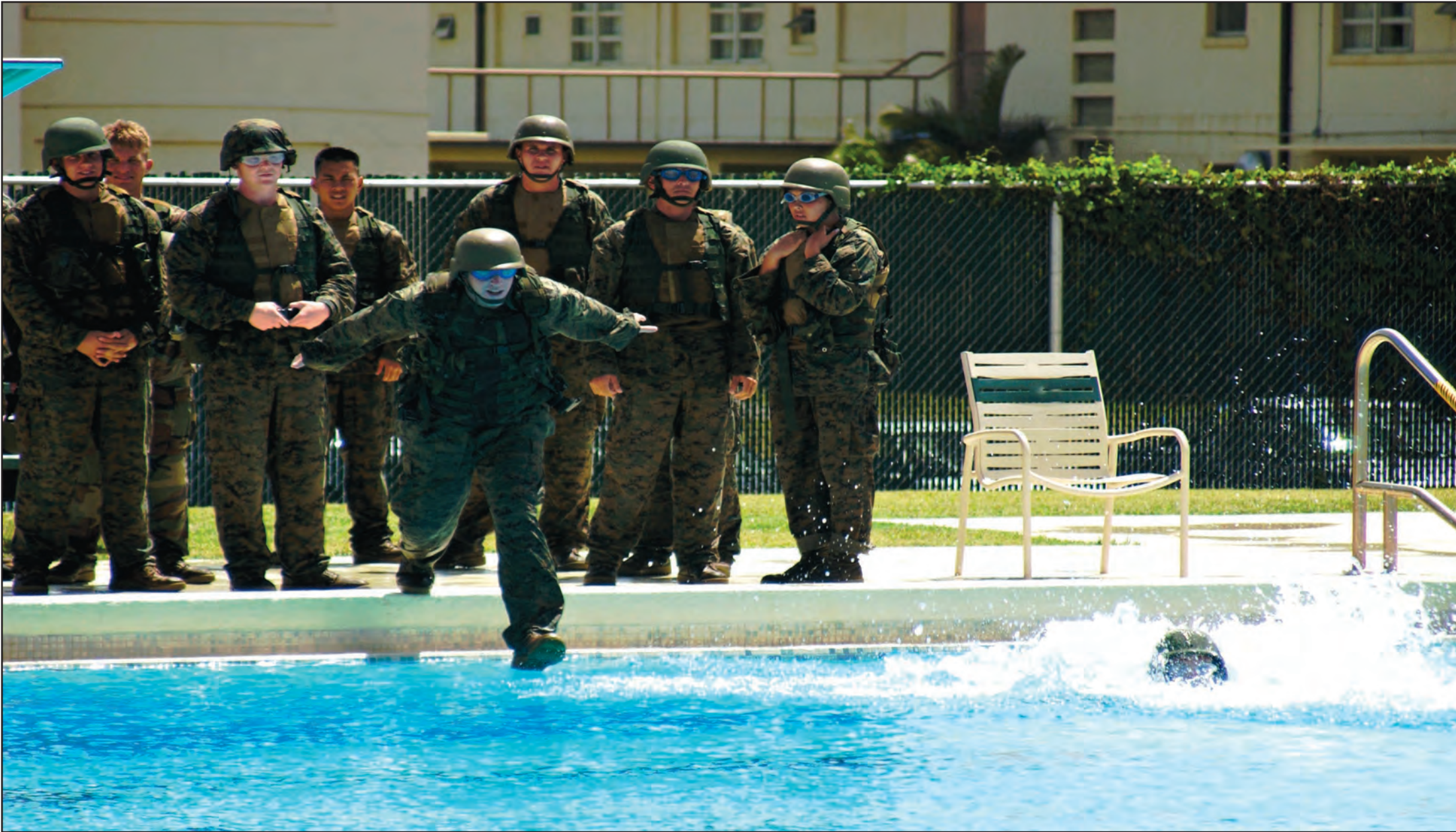
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Lance Cpl. Roger L. Nelson

A Marine in the Marine Combat Water Survival course jumps into a pool during the rescue swim portion of the course to save a drowning “victim.” Marines must successfully retrieve a “victim” and swim them to safety.

Survival of the fittest

Marine Combat Instructor Trainer of Water Survival



Cpl. Michelle M. Dickson

A rescuer pulls his drowning victim across the pool during a combat water survival course.

Lance Cpl. Roger L. Nelson
Combat Correspondent

In a combat situation, it's every Marine's priority to be well trained and know what to do in any situation, whether it be taking direct fire or falling into a river wearing full combat gear.

According to Staff Sgt. Timothy A. Hartmann, Marine Combat Instructor Trainer of Water Survival, Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Pacific, the Marine Corps has had approximately 30 drownings since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, so training is important in order to prevent these accidents.

"A lot of the deaths that have happened in Iraq due to drowning were very preventable," said Hartmann. "There are a lot of field expedient devices that Marines carry that could have been used to save some of the lives – if they would have had the knowledge taught to them."

Recently MCIWS instructors were aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, to teach Marines how to conduct swim qualifications and to prepare them for deployment, during the 15-day training course sponsored by 3rd Radio Battalion, here.

Marines attending the course had to swim more than 30 miles, in conditioning swims, perform three different types of rescues on victims, who were wearing full combat gear, while also wearing full combat gear, learn the survival strikes, and pass more than six written exams.

Upon graduation, Marines receive a secondary Military Occupational Specialty as A Marine Combat Instructor of Water Survival.

"Once these Marines become instructors, they will be able to teach swim qualifications at all levels, to include qualifying safety swimmers," said Hartmann, a Daytona Beach, Fla. native. "After they obtain this MOS, they must conduct training every year to remain current in the program, but they only have to recertify every three years."

Hartmann said each Marine going through the training has his or her own strengths and weaknesses in each section.

"For me, I think the classroom time will be the most difficult," said Sgt. Matt A. Fulling, signals intelligents analyst, 3rd Radio Battalion.

There is a lot of material that is given in a three-inch binder that the person in the course will be tested on, he said

"The physical part is demanding, but I haven't had a problem with it so far," Fulling admitted.

According to Fulling, he signed up to take this course so he will be more proficient in the water and will be able to help out a fellow Marine, if that time comes.

"I think the Marines' main problem with the course is not knowing how to stay calm in the water," said 29-year-old Hartmann. "The material we teach is very effective – if the Marines pay attention to what they're learning."

Also, for the course to be 100 percent effective, the instructors must be able to teach what they've learned to other Marines.

But, I think they come out of this course more than capable of getting the job done."

He added, the MCIWS course is currently undergoing review to determine whether or not changes need to be made to better meet the needs of the Marine Corps.

"The course is open to anyone in the Marines Corps, and if you're an E-3 or below, you have to have a rank waiver," said Hartmann. "The course is demanding, but can be done, and I strongly recommend it to Marines."



Lance Cpl. Roger L. Nelson

Combat gear is staged at poolside ready for students to don. During the Marine Combat Instructor Water Survival course, students must wear combat gear, including Kevlar, flack jacket, pack and weapon. Each student will carry approximately 25 pounds of gear during some portions of this course.

Communications Marines play major role behind scenes

Lance Cpl. Ryan Trevino
Combat Correspondent

POHAKULOA TRAINING AREA, HAWAII — While the line company Marines from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, here, were training from dusk until dawn for their upcoming deployment to Iraq, other Marines were providing the crucial support necessary to accomplish their mission. These support Marines, who aren't as easily noticed, are working behind the scenes and playing a major part in the overall productivity of the entire unit.

The 73 Marines assigned to Communications Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, 2/3, make up a major part of unit's support element. They are responsible for connecting and coordinating all the communication between the line companies and the center of command, according to Sgt. Raymond A. Cardoza, radio supervisor, Communications Platoon, H&S Company, 2/3.

"Comm involves everything," said Cardoza. "We provide the link between all the different elements of the unit. Without Comm, line companies can't continue their mission."

Communications is broken down into four areas of expertise: Radio operators, wiremen, information system coordinators and technicians.

Each job in the communications field serves a specific

purpose in supporting the line companies during training and deployments.

A radio operator's main job is to support the line companies by operating all of the radio equipment, Cardoza said. Line radio operators stay with their assigned line companies while training and during deployments, doing everything the infantrymen do and more, explained Sgt. Levi M. Moran, radio operator, communications platoon, H&S Company, 2/3.

"We carry everything a grunt carries — plus a radio," said Moran.

"Basically, we are battery-operated grunts," added Cardoza, who, like Moran, has spent plenty of time working in the field with the line companies during several deployments.

Wiremen help set up the phone lines needed to make communication easier between all the different parts of the unit. They deal with anything that has to do with running cable, said Cardoza.

The information system coordinators within Communications Platoon deal with anything that has to do with computers, including setting up internet accounts and creating and maintaining Web sites for the companies within the unit, said Cardoza. They also are responsible for setting up networks that allow the passage of sensitive material between commands.

Technicians are required to fix any radio equipment that may become damaged during



Lance Cpl. Ryan Trevino

Sergeant Alan K. Holloway, squad leader, 1st Platoon, Golf Company, 2nd Battalion 3rd Marines, teaches his Marines the basics of using the radio. It is important for every Marine in the platoon to know how to use a radio, just in case the primary radio operator goes down.

training exercises or deployments.

"If anything breaks, they're the ones who fix it," stated Cardoza.

Communications Marines are taught about the job they have been assigned during their Marine Occupational Specialty school, but eventually cross train in the other fields, once they have checked into their first unit, said

Cardoza.

Since communication is so vital to the mission, knowledge of the radio has to extend beyond the communications Marines. Radio operators assigned to line companies teach classes to the infantry Marines to ensure that every Marine in the company knows how to operate a radio, if the primary radio operator is injured or killed.

Not all radio operators are out in the field. Some remain in the rear at the Combat Operations Center where they are responsible for logging every piece of information that comes over the network. If the wrong information is sent or received incorrectly by the radio operators, many problems could arise.

"It's important that every

transmission is transmitted correctly," said Cardoza. "If the wrong information is passed, he could hurt the company."

Basically, Cardoza added, the line companies can't move a step without the support of their Communications Marines.

Maran added, "The comm is the bloodline of the companies."

Okinawa-based Marines, Sailors respond to Indonesian earthquake



Lance Cpl. Warren Peace

Lieutenant Cmdr. Carlos Godinez operates on the foot of in Indonesian man in Bantul, Indonesia, May 31 after a 6.2 magnitude earthquake struck the island of Java. Godinez is a III Marine Expeditionary Force surgeon.

Lance Cpl. Warren Peace
Marine Forces Pacific

JAVA, Indonesia — Medical experts from the III Marine Expeditionary Force in Okinawa, Japan, visited hospitals and medical clinics near Bantul, Indonesia, May 31 in the wake of a 6.2 magnitude earthquake that struck near the ancient city of Yogyakarta.

While at the medical facilities, the service members helped treat patients injured from the disaster.

The team of about 100 Okinawa-based Marines and Sailors continue to arrive at the Indonesian government's request for assistance.

Those already present also saw their first patients today in temporary medical facilities they established in a soccer

field in Sewon, near Yogyakarta, to help relieve the overflow of patients from local hospitals.

Victims treated included those with fractures, burns and other injuries sustained during the earthquake.

The temporary facility will be fully functional tomorrow, complete with surgical, acute and primary care, laboratory, dental, x-ray and preventive medicine capabilities.

"The physicians here are doing an excellent job," said Lt. Cmdr. Carlos D. Godinez, a III Marine Expeditionary Force surgeon stationed in Okinawa, Japan.

"Their biggest problem the Indonesian hospitals are having is an overflow of patients. I expected orthopedic injuries, but not of this severity. It's almost overwhelming."

Safety Stand Down reminds service members to stay safe

Lance Cpl. Ryan Trevino
Combat Correspondent

At one point, during the 2006 Memorial Day Safety Stand Down held at the Base Theater May 23 and 24, renowned motivational speaker and humorist Art Fettig raised his arm high in the air then told everyone in the audience to do the same. Next, with his right arm still raised, he connected the tip of his index finger with the tip of his thumb, forming a circle. He again asked the audience to follow suit. Anxiety filled the theater. No one in the audience knew where this was heading.

The speaker then told the audience to bring the circle they had made with their fingers to their chins and slowly placed his circled fingers on his cheek. A couple of silent seconds passed. The audience, now quiet, still seemed to be clueless as to why they were instructed to place their circled fingers on their chin.

Fettig visually scanned the audience with his hand still forming a circle on his cheek. He smiled when he saw that everyone in the

crowd had his or her hand placed on his or her cheek instead of his or her chin, as Fettig verbally told them to do. The lesson was slowly coming to light.

"See — people do what they see, not what they hear," he said.

He let a few moments pass, allowing the members of the audience to let the lesson they had just learned sink in.

This was just one of the many tips he shared with the audience.

Fettig delivered his safety briefing, using a unique blend of humor and catchy slogans to grab the attention of the audience.

"Every seven minutes, you have to earn the right to talk another seven minutes," said the 76-year-old Korean War veteran, who designed all of his speeches to exercise the minds and bodies of his audience to keep their attention.

The event was held to remind service members and Department of Defense civilians to practice good safety habits during the 101 days of summer, said Sergio Pablo, safety specialist, Base Safety.

Memorial Day kicks off the 101

days of summer, when accidents that can be avoided easily tend to increase in numbers. It is the most dangerous time of the year, according to Pablo.

Fettig presented his audience with a number of ways to become more safety conscious throughout the summer. His presentation focused mainly on driver's safety. He presented the audience with a simple five-item checklist that all drivers should review before starting the ignition of any vehicle. The items:

- Seatbelt fastened?
- Rested, sober, clear head?
- Know your route?
- Is there time for this trip?
- Remember to "Just Drive"

Fettig has been working in the safety field since 1948. He has also been a professional speaker for more than 35 years and is certified by the National Speakers Association.

Fettig left his audience with a simplistic approach to driving safely.

"Be your own best friend, because only you can keep you safe."

Excellence Recognized



Courtesy photo by Zweig Photography, Inc.

Paul Hubbell, Deputy Director, LF, Headquarters, Marine Corps (left); Kent Murata, Assistant Chief of Staff (ACS), G-4, Marine Corps Base Hawaii; Dr. Diane Drigot, Senior Natural Resources Management Specialist, MCBH; and BJ Penn, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Installations and Environment) pose for a photo with one of the Secretary of the Navy awards received: the Environmental Quality Award, (in the nonindustrial installation category), during an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., May 3.

Deployed Marine hears baby’s first cry

Cpl. Mark Sixbey
1st Marine Division

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq — Lance Cpl. Charles Monroe Bates doesn’t have a wallet photo of his first child just yet. The tiny screen on his MP3 player will have to do for now.

The Marine Corps Integrated Management System clerk with Headquarters and Support Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment heard his first child’s first breath at the battalion’s phone center at Camp Fallujah, May 16.

Lillian Swan Bates was born at 12:22 p.m., weighing in at 7 pounds, 11 ounces at a hospital in Medford, Ore.

“It’s extraordinary — amazing,” said the 25-year-old from Middletown, Ohio. “I think about it every night and when I wake up. It’s a dream I’ve always had, to be a dad.”

Charles and his wife, Michelle, found out about their pregnancy just before the battalion began its intensive pre-deployment training nine months ago. They knew the child’s birth would happen during the deployment and Bates couldn’t contain his excitement as the nine-month mark drew near.

“He pretty much talked about it every single day,” said

Lance Cpl. Weslie Thien, Bates’ roommate. “The day his child was born was mostly a surprise. He didn’t know the exact day, but the week leading up to it he was anxious.”

Bates had just finished his work for the day at the battalion’s armory. He explained his situation to the duty sergeant at the phone center, who told Bates he could talk as long as he needed.

His sister-in-law answered the first call and handed the phone to Michelle. They spoke on the phone for two hours as she endured increasingly frequent contractions.

“She started to dilate, and she was concentrating more on the phone than the pushing so her nurse told me to a call back in 30 minutes,” he said.

Tense minutes passed as he waited to make the next call.

His timing was perfect. “Right as I called back, her sister picked up the phone and said ‘hold on a second; wait for it ... now!’ and you could hear the baby’s first cry,” he said. “My first thought was ‘I’m a dad!’”

“Once he told me, he was full of joy, and couldn’t get the smile off his face,” said Thien, 24, from Woodrider, Ill.

Bates was born in Panama City, Fla. His father, a career Air Force airman, moved his fami-

ly to Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. He graduated Middletown High School in 1998, where he played soccer for the Middletown Middies. He enrolled at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, for three semesters until his mother, Priscilla Bates Swan, became ill.

“My mom was diagnosed with cancer, so I took time off to go be with her,” he said. “She’s 100 percent recovered now. She’s a strong woman – a survivor.”

Bates then worked various jobs until he decided to enlist in the Marine Corps in February of 2004. He said his experience in the Corps has helped prepare him for fatherhood.

“The Marine Corps taught me that I can pretty much take on anything,” he said. “I know I can deal with whatever comes at me.”

Thien saw his own firstborn son delivered the day he returned from Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005. He said he has faith that his friend will rise to the role of fatherhood.

“I honestly think he’s going to make a good dad,” he said. “He’s an all-around good guy and good Marine.”

Bates said his own optimism comes from family support, particularly from the women



Cpl. Mark Sixbey

Lance Cpl. Charles Monroe Bates, Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, holds a picture of his newborn daughter’s footprints on his MP3 player at Camp Fallujah, Iraq.

in his life.

“My mom has done a lot to make my family happen,” he said. “My wife is wonderful. I’d like to thank her family for being there for her, for us, during this time. They helped to support her when I wasn’t

there.”

Bates has since seen Lillian though emailed pictures, Web-based cameras and listened to her cooing over the phone.

“It’s been quite an adventure already and I’m not even there,” he said. “When I get home, I don’t think I’ll ever put her down.”

Marine combat engineers repair Iraq's roadways

Cpl. Stephen Holt
1st Marine Logistics Group

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq — The sound of a cement mixer breaks up the darkness on a lone Iraqi road near the city of Fallujah. Marines are working in what is known as "black out" condition - no light other than the moon and the occasional glimmer of a flashlight. It's 6 a.m. on May 24, and the lazing Iraqi sun will soon be rising.

This is the time many Americans get up for work, but for the combat engineers of Charlie Company, they've already put in an eight-hour day.

The Marines of Charlie Company, commonly referred to as "Hell-Bent Charlie," of Combat Logistics Battalion 5, are hard at work repairing the roads that intersect the city and countryside of Fallujah.

Repairing the streets of Iraq isn't quite like repaving a road in the United States. Instead of fluorescent orange vests and hardhats road workers wear in the States, Marine engineers carry rifles with optic sights, and wear combat gear consisting of a protective vest, helmet and ammunition for a combined weight of over 50 pounds.

The roads these Marines work on are traveled by Iraqi citizens, along with coalition and Iraqi Security Forces and are constantly damaged by roadside bomb attacks.

Fixing them is crucial to the movement of supplies and troops in the area, said Maj. Steven R. Svendsen, the executive officer of CLB-5 and 40-year-old native of Beaman, Iowa. The work done by the Marines is also helping rebuild the Iraqi infrastructure, he said.

The night repair mission begins right after dusk with a quick meeting entailing the mission and latest intelligence findings. Last minute gear checks are conducted before they leave the security of Camp Fallujah where they're based.

"Hell Bent Charlie" goes straight to work quickly filling two holes as soon as they leave the confines of the base.

Not much longer afterwards they encounter the very threat they are trying to fight - an improvised

explosive device, commonly called IEDs. The engineers set up security and call the explosive ordinance disposal team. The potentially deadly device is neutralized in minutes and the Marine road workers press on.

These road-side bombs are a favored weapon used by the enemy to wreak havoc on coalition forces. The threat of IEDs is one of the main reasons these Marines are on the road.

"A lot of (the roads) have fallen into disrepair over the years; (they are) a perfect place for an insurgent to put an IED," said 1st Lt. Edward J. Walsh, a 26-year-old native of Melrose, Mass.

Sometimes craters from IEDs are used multiple times making the work to fill these dangerous potholes very important, explained Walsh.

For the craters to be repaved efficiently, the Marines must work together while performing individual tasks. Different teams of engineers have specific jobs and responsibilities that fit into the overall route repair process.

While conducting the repairs separate teams are tasked to provide security, survey the crater to make sure it is safe to repair, and conduct the actual repair,



Cpl. Stephen Holt

Sgt. Shawn Peterson, a 27-year-old native of Missoula, Mont., pours freshly mixed concrete into a crater on May 25, 2006, during a route repair mission. The threat of improvised explosive devices is one of the main reasons the Marines conduct route repairs.

said Sgt. Shawn Peterson, a 27-year-old native of Missoula, Mont.

The Marines have to work fast to avoid being a target of insurgents and still perform their job with precision. Many of these missions have been subject to deadly sniper and mortar attacks.

Surveying is the first step to repairing the road. Many factors must be calculated to properly repair a crater.

"We have to account for the size of the hole, depth of the hole and how long we're going to be on site," said Peterson.

For a crater to be filled properly, dirt is molded into a foundation, then cement is poured in, said SSgt. Jose R. Miranda, a 26-year-old from Mayaguez, Puerto Rico.

After smoothing off the top of the quick-drying road patch their off in search of more roads in need.

Working with hundreds of pounds of concrete mix and dirt - in temperatures well above 100 degrees during the day - is a physically demanding job for these Marines. The results of their efforts are evident to the engineers every time a convoy rides a road made safer by their work.

Riding in the back of a vehicle on a freshly repaired road in Iraq, his uniform splattered with dried concrete mix, Lance Cpl. Joshua I. Hamptonhanshaw, looked content.

"It's nice seeing the results of what I'm doing," said the 21-year-old native of Phoenix, Ariz.

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for coalition forces, a dangerous occupation at the time, he said.

“I saw Husaybah fill with terrorists every day and no one could do anything about it because they would be killed,” said Ahmed. “I couldn’t continue to work as a translator because they would kill me if they found out about my work.”

It didn’t take long for insurgents to learn of Ahmed’s occupation as a translator. They kidnapped him, and for eight days, he was handcuffed and beaten because he had helped the Americans, he said.

“They just came in and threatened everybody,” he said.

The only thing that saved his life was his family’s determination to seek retribution for his disappearance, according to Ahmed.

That is precisely the fighting spirit Ahmed claims that the people of Husaybah currently have in their new police force.

Unlike many Iraqi soldiers who often serve outside of

their hometowns, the police here are all local men – more incentive for them to keep the neighborhoods crime and terrorist-free, said Ahmed.

“If I see a terrorist, I will kill him,” said Ahmed.

“The Iraqi police are doing their job well and they are trying to match the job that the Marines and Iraqi Army are doing of providing security.”

~ 2nd Lt. Chris J. Jamison

The police conduct regular security patrols alongside Marines and for the most part, work independently, according to the Marines who work alongside Iraqi Security Forces here.

“They are providing law and order in their city and are abiding by all Iraqi laws,” said Marshall.

“These guys take initiative and they are motivated despite the violence against them,” said the Denver native. “They really care about being



Cpl. Antonio Rosas

Iraqi police officers and U.S. Marines patrol in Husaybah, Iraq.

police officers and are not in it just for the paycheck.”

Marshall noted that the police officers here worked nearly two months without seeing a paycheck. It was only until last week when they were finally paid.

The Marines of 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment – the Marine unit assigned to provide security and assist Iraqi Security Forces in the Euphrates Valley region

in northwestern Al Anbar Province – have also watched the police officers evolve and begin to take the lead in security operations.

“The Iraqi police are doing their job well and they are trying to match the job that the Marines and Iraqi Army are doing of providing security,” said 2nd Lt. Chris J. Jamison, a platoon commander with Company B.

Patrolling the area and pro-

viding security is a step-by-step process, said Jamison.

“Teaching the police to do that job is tough but they are motivated and they are starting to do things they way we do,” said Jamison.

Jamison and his Company B Marines conducted foot patrols with the new officers for two weeks to establish a presence in the community and introduce the policemen as a new element of Iraqi Security Forces.

Jamison noted that there is an added sense of security for his Marines when patrolling with the Iraqi police because the officers know the area and the people.

“They live here. They know who doesn’t belong,” said Jamison.

Now that Ahmed is working in his hometown after years of serving alongside Marines and soldiers far away from his family in Baghdad, he feels he finally has a job he can be proud of – keeping his city safe.

“I see my family every day now and I am working in the city where I am from,” said Ahmed.

When asked how his neigh-

bors felt about his decision to become a policeman, Ahmed said that people look up to him and help him everyday. He said the people here want their police to enforce the law.

Furthermore, local tribal sheiks have pushed for the Iraqi police to take over responsibility of keeping the people safe, said Ahmed.

The sheiks maintain regular communication with Marine commanders and have applauded their new police force, he said.

Ahmed said he knows that the Marines eventual withdrawal from Iraq is dependent on the success of his police officers’ ability to maintain security in the town on their own.

But progress is steady, and the Iraqi police are ready for the responsibility of protecting their city, said Ahmed.

“We will sacrifice ourselves to keep the bad guys out,” he said.

U.S. government and military officials have stated that Iraqi Security Forces should be ready to spearhead security operations throughout Iraq by year’s end.

